

St. PAUL's Triumph
 IN HIS
 SUFFERINGS
 FOR
 CHRIST.

With some Directions how a Christian
 ought to behave himself under, and may
 reap Advantage by his Sufferings.

By MATTHEW BRYAN, LL. D.



L O N D O N :

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1692
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ECCLESIAE

*Sub Cruce gementi, ac Simul triumphanti,
Ideòq; cis Statum Gloriæ gloriosæ,
Sole (Portentum aliud Cælo!) amictæ, Lunamq; conculcanti,
Duodecim Stellarum Coronâ Capita redimitæ,
Mundo, cum Charissimo Crucifixo, beatòque Paulo, crucifixæ,
Precibus Lachrymisque, Armis suis, militanti,
Satanam, ejusque omnia Opera, fideliter renuncianti,
Schismatis æquè ac Hæreseos Crimina odio habenti,
Gregi, prob dolor! parvulo,
Ei verò, cui evangelizavit Christus, simillimo,
Συνιδίως ergò (cujus noluit facere naufragium) Mundana
relinquenti,
Providentiâ, quæ Omnia curat, imò Aviculas & Campi
Flosculos, alacriter visitanti,
Præcepta Dei, Fidemque Jesu, mirâ tolerantia, observanti,
Doctrinam, Vitamq; Christi strenno asserenti ac imitanti,
Pristinum Omnipotentis Cultum, primævâ Pietate, celebranti,
Spiritu ac Veritate Patrem Cælestem adoranti,
S. S. Spiritûs Arrhabonem accipienti,
Ac Στέφανον πιστὸν ὃν παθόντα anhelanti,*

M. B.

*Indignus ἐστὶν τῇ θλίψει ἀδελφοὶς ὃν συνηγορεῖς
Hunc, qualem qualem, Conciunculam,
In grati, fidique Animi testimonium
Humillimè dicat consecratque.*

ECCLÉSIE

Le 20 Mars 1790

Assemblée Générale

Le 20 Mars 1790

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St. PAUL's Triumph
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Eph. IV. 1.

I therefore the Prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith ye are called.

THE Illative *therefore* naturally points to somewhat that goes before; and for this we must look back as far as the beginning of the former Chapter. *For this Cause*—that is, considering the many glorious Priviledges, which by Virtue of your Relation to Christ, you are honour'd with:—*For this cause, I Paul the Prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles*—And then he makes a Digression, explaining and magnifying his Office, wherein, by Commission from *Christ*, he stood more particularly related to them. He makes, I say,

say, a Digression in a long Parenthesis as far as the beginning of the 4th. Chapter, where he resumes his Argument, from which he abruptly brake off before: — *I therefore the Prisoner of the Lord* — Which is a Repetition, or Recollection of his former Words at the first Verse of the foregoing Chapter — *For this cause I Paul the Prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles.* — For the Connection of which, to make it sense, we must have regard to the Words at the first Verse of the 4th Chapter, — *beseech you that ye walk worthy, &c.* — *I Paul the Prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles* — *beseech you that ye walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith ye are called.* So here, *I therefore the Prisoner of the Lord* (which is a Repetition of the former Words) *beseech you that ye walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith ye are called.* In which words there are these two things considerable,

1st. The Character which St. Paul chooseth to recommend himself by, and enforce his following Exhortation. — *I therefore the Prisoner of the Lord.* —

2dly. Here's the Exhortation it self, and that is to a suitable and agreeable Conversation, worthy of the Christian Vocation: — *I beseech you that ye walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith ye are called.*

The Time will not permit me to speak distinctly to each of these. I shall therefore insist upon the former, and only touch upon the latter in the Application.

The first thing which here offers it self to our consideration (and which shall be the subject of my ensuing Discourse) is,

1st. The Character which *St. Paul* chooseth to recommend himself by, and enforce his following Exhortation.—*I the Prisoner of the Lord.*—

What? may some say, could *St. Paul* choose no better, no other Character than that of a *Prisoner*! a very unpromising, uninviting Character to indear or recommend, very unlikely to gain Esteem, or Respect, or Credit in the World, unlikely to gain Proselytes, or draw Disciples after him! For, who is in love with Prisons and Confinement? who is fond of noysome Goals, and Dungeons of darkness? who admires Chains, and Fetters, and Shackles of Iron, the Ornament, the Dress of *Prisoners*, who are fed with the *Bread of Adversity*, and the *Water of Affliction*, whose Musick is sighs and groans, and their recreation whips and scourges with *St. Paul* and *Silas*, or the Stocks with *Joseph*, where they hurt his Feet, the Iron entering into his Soul?

The World is apt to worship the rising Sun, to adore growing Greatness and Magnificence, to court, and be influenc'd by Riches, Power and Grandeur; and consequently to despise Poverty and Meanness, Misery and afflicted Innocence.

How unlikely is this Lecture, this Epistle to prevail with the Auditors, which is deliver'd, which is sent by *Paul the Prisoner*, who talks of Riches and Honour, and Power and Liberty for his Disciples, when himself is poor, and despised, and weak and in bonds? who would run to him for help, who cannot help himself? who would go to him for riches, who is poor, for honour, who is despised, for power, who is weak, or for liberty, who is a *Prisoner*?

How

How impolitickly, how imprudently and indiscreetly does *St. Paul* make his choice here of a Character to recommend himself by to the good Opinion and Affections of Men? How unplaussible, unpromising, and uninviting a Title is this, *I the Prisoner of the Lord?*

'Tis true, it is so in the Eye of the World, which is govern'd and influenc'd by Sense, and outward Appearance, and blindly led by Brutal Passions and Appetites. Thus when our *Saviour* exerted his Power as a King, in working Miracles, casting out Devils, healing the Diseased, raising the Dead, and feeding the Living at the Expence of a Miracle, entertaining so vast a Multitude, so many thousands at that noble, bounteous Feast in the *Wilderness*, where a few Loaves and Fishes were miraculously multiplied into a prodigious Plenty, and abundant Overplus, after the numerous Guests had eaten and were satisfied : when, I say, He thus exerted his Power as a King, in working Miracles, and doing Wonders, he wanted not Followers, he had plenty of Disciples, who in shoals and crowds thronged after him: but when he preach'd the Doctrine of the *Cross*, which his Disciples must take up and follow him ; when he told them of suffering, and tribulation, and a severe persecution, which they must undergo for his sake and the Gospel's, of which he had already begun, and would ere long give 'em a more glorious Example ; then *they are offended at him*, they halt, and stagger, and run from him ; multitudes *went back, and walked no more with him* ; as the Evangelist *St. John* tells us in the 6th Chapter of his Gospel at the 66th Verse.

Such

Such an Enemy to the *Cross* was *St. Paul*, himself before his Conversion; but after it, his Eyes being anointed with that Sovereign Eye-salve, prescribed by the wise Physician, receiving an *Unction from the Holy One*, he saw with other Eyes, had a new Idea, a new representation of Objects, which were set in a truer and better Light, and learnt to prize and value what before he despised, of whose worth he had not skill enough to make a true Judgement and Estimate.

No wonder then that he makes choice, and that wisely enough, (as I hope I shall convince you before I have done) of this Character here, *the Prisoner of the Lord*. And this he does, I conceive, for these following Reasons.

1st. He looks upon this Character, not as matter of disgrace, but as the greatest, as the highest honour.

2^{dly}. Herein he gives an instance of his being conformed to *the Captain of our Salvation*, of his being made partaker of the sufferings of Christ.

3^{dly}. Herein he shews his resemblance to the noble Army of Martyrs, the early sufferers before the Incarnation.

4^{ly}. Hereby he gives an evidence of his fellowship with the suffering Saints and Martyrs since the Incarnation, and Crucifixion of Christ.

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54. 'Tis a Presumption, if not a Demonstration
of the Truth of that Doctrine which he taught
and deliver'd.

64. Suffering is the Touch-stone of Vertue, and
the Tryal of Sincerity.

1st. He looks upon this Character, not as matter
of disgrace, but as the greatest, as the highest
Honour.

— *The Prisoner of the Lord*, or for the Lord,
or for the Lord's sake. — What greater Honour can
there be! To be a *Prisoner* for his sake, who is
the Belov'd of the Father, who is *King of Kings*,
and *Lord of Lords*, who is *exalted far above Princi-
palities and Powers*, and every name that is named, to
whom the whole *Family in Heaven and Earth* do *bow
and obey*; to be a *Prisoner* in his quarrel, and to
suffer for him, what greater Honour can there be! to
suffer for him, who has suffer'd for all, and is
the great *Redeemer and Saviour* of Mankind, and
who shall come to Judge the World, whose
Word shall give Law to the Universe, and deter-
mine the everlasting State both of Men and Devils,
from which there is no Appeal for ever, at whose
command and direction rewards and punishments
shall be variously distributed to the many thousands
and millions of the Sons and Daughters of Adam;
to suffer for him, and in his quarrel, what greater
Honour can there be!

To be the *Prisoner of the Lord*, St. Paul esteems
as a more honourable, worthier Title than that of
a learned Jew, or a precise Pharisee, a Disciple, a
Scholar

Scholar of Gamaliel's, or a Doctor, yea, an Apostle of the Gentiles; yea, than the Son of a King, an Heir to an Empire, or a mighty Potentate, whose Scepters and Chains of Gold he took upon to be less beautiful than his Fetters of Iron. Every Link in his Chain was more ornamental than the Jewels in the Diadems, in the Crowns of Princes. *I am* Rom. I. 16. *not ashamed*, says he, *of the Gospel of Christ.* We glory in Tribulations. *I am not ashamed of this Chain.* 5. 3. *God forbid*, says he, *that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the World is crucified unto me, and I unto the World.* Gal. 6. 14. *I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; as it is in the* 2 Cor. 12, 10. *He esteems it as a piece of Honour, a Royal Grant and Privilege to suffer for Christ. Unto you it is given* (says he to the Philippians) *in the* Phil. I. 19. *behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake, having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now here to be in me.* He exults; and rejoices, and blesses God that he is counted worthy to suffer shame for his Name! But that which others counted shame he counted Glory. So far was he from startling at sufferings, at the Name of Prison and Confinement, or being ashamed of the Character of Prisoner for the sake of Christ, that he breaks out into a vehement Passion, and holy Anger with those who (out of an unreasonable, ill-timed Charity and Pity, and deep concern for his Temporal interest, which they passionately advis'd him to consult, like Peter of Old, *Master pity thy self*) dissuaded him from going up to Jerusalem for fear of those Bonds and Imprisonment, which the

Prophet *Agabus* said did await him there. *What* mean ye, says he, *to weep and to break my heart, for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to dye at Jerusalem for the Name of the Lord Jesus.* *Act.* 21. 13.

2ly. Herein he gives an Instance of his being conformed to the *Captain of our Salvation*, of his being made *partaker of the sufferings of Christ*: who is stil'd *Heb. 2. 10. The Captain of our Salvation, who was made perfect by sufferings.* Now the Souldier must be conformable to his Captain. He must engage in the same War, he must enter the same bloody Field, and fight the same Battles, and against the same Enemies; he must run the same danger, and undergo the same hardships that his Captain does: or else he is unworthy of the Name, or Title, or relation of a Souldier, and instead of being rewarded, deserves to be punished. Now *St. Paul* was a Souldier, yea a great Officer, and Commander under the *Captain-General* of the *Spiritual Forces*. And he tells us *Phil. 3. 10.* that he desir'd nothing more than to *have fellowship with him in his sufferings, and to be made conformable unto his death.* And every Christian is bound according to his measure and capacity to do the same thing. Every Christian is a *Spiritual Souldier*, and has oblig'd and engag'd himself to *fight manfully under the Banner of Christ.* The *Apostle* makes suffering to be antecedaneous to glorification, nay to be the condition of inheriting Glory, *Rom. 8. 17.* observe the Gradation there. At the 16th. Verse the *Apostle* says, *The Spirit it self beareth witness with our Spirit, that*
we

we are the Children of God. And if Children, then Heirs; Heirs with God, and joynt-Heirs with Christ. It follows, *if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.* 'Tis an undoubted Truth, that the Christian that refuses to suffer with Christ shall not be glorified with him.

'Tis true, a Christian is not bound to seek, to court suffering, to run himself into the Fire. If he is persecuted in one place, he is permitted to fly to another. But if he cannot escape, if he cannot fly, he must suffer. If the *Cross* be not only offer'd to, but laid upon his Shoulder, he must not basely cast it off. If the *Crown of Thorns* be platted for and put upon his Head, he must not refuse to wear it. If a Christian is brought to that streight with *Peter*, that either he must take up the *Cross*, or deny his Master, either suffer or sin, it is easie to determine which side to take, and what to do. In this case a Christian is indispenibly bound to suffer, and he that declines it, refuses to suffer with *Christ*, and consequently cannot expect to be glorified together with him.

But perhaps you'll say, God forbid that we should refuse to suffer with *Christ*. We are ready to suffer Martyrdom for him, to dye for him, to burn at a stake rather than deny him, or renounce our Religion, in which we were baptiz'd and educated.

'Tis well resolv'd indeed, but 'tis sooner said than done. There are divers sorts of sufferings for *Christ*. There is a sort of Martyrdom besides burning at a Stake. The Christian that resolves to suffer rather than sin is a *Martyr in Will*. And he

that chooses) actually to suffer rather than sin, is a *Martyr in deed*.

Now examine the sincerity of your Resolution in lesser Instances, which are below the greater *Martyrdom*, suffering death for the sake of *Christ*. He that is poor, and to help himself will steal, refuses to suffer with *Christ*. He that to avoid the loss of a little trival Profit, or to secure his Estate, when he is threatned with the loss of it, will do unlawful things, will lye, and swear, or forswear, and act against his Conscience, and the word of God, and his own words too, he deny's *Christ*, and refuses to suffer with him, and consequently cannot expect to be glorified together. He refuses to fight under the Banner of *Christ*, notwithstanding his Vow; but is a perfidious, base Defserter, and runs over to the Enemies Camp, and therefore cannot expect to be rewarded by his own General, to whom he has sworn Fidelity, but on the contrary, when he falls into his hands must expect the fate of base Deserters.

That's the second Reason of St. Paul's choice of this Character, *The Prisoner of the Lord*. He here-in gives an Instance of his being conformed to the *Captain of our Salvation*, of his being made partaker of the sufferings of *Christ*. Which must mightily recommend him to the good Opinion, and Affections of all good Christians.

3ly. Herein he shews his resemblance to the noble Army of Martyrs, the early Sufferers before the Incarnation. Whose Martyrology, whose renowned sufferings are compendiously historified

in

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in the 11th. to the Hebrews: which tells us that by Faith Moses when he was come to years, refused to be called the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of Sin for a Season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater Riches than all Treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the King: for he endur'd as seeing him who is invisible. Others were tortured not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better Resurrection. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of Bonds and Imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the Sword: they wandered about in Sheep-skins and Goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. Of whom, says the Historian, the World was not worthy. They wandered in Deserts, and in Mountains, and in Dens, and Caves of the Earth. These were the Proto-Martyrs, the early Sufferers before the Incarnation. To whom our Apostle shews his resemblance by this Character of the Prisoner of the Lord.

4b. Hereby he gives an evidence of his fellowship with the suffering Saints and Martyrs since the Incarnation and Crucifixion of Christ. Hereby he declares his fellowship with that bold courageous Sufferer, St. John the Baptist, who was a Prisoner and a Martyr in his confinement: With St. Stephen, the glorious First Martyr after the Ascension of our Lord; to whose death St. Paul was not only a Witness but an Assistant too, consenting unto

unto his death : with all those sufferings Christians whom he himself had persecuted, *breathing out threatnings and slaughter against the Disciples of the Lord, and being exceedingly mad against them, caused them to blaspheme ; making havock of the Church, killing Men and Women, committed them to Prison, where he himself is now their joyful Companion.*

sly. 'Tis a Presumption, if not a Demonstration of the Truth of that Doctrine which he taught and delivered. There are two ways of confirming any Revelation from Heaven ; *Miracles and Suffering.*

Now by both these our *Saviour* confirm'd his Doctrine, especially by the former : and the Apostles more especially by the latter, who therefore were call'd *Martyrs*, that is, witnesses to the Truth of the Gospel by their sufferings. Which gain'd mighty Credit and Reputation to it ; which drew on multitudes of Disciples, brought in shoals of Proselytes, according to the old Observation, that *the Blood of the Martyrs is the Seed of the Church.* He that dares suffer for his Religion, that can suffer Bonds, and Imprisonment, and death, for *Christ*, that can suffer the loss of his Goods and Estate, his Livelihood and his Life, for the Doctrine he delivers, gives a Presumption that it is true, and that he believes it to be so. But if when he is call'd to suffer, he starts aside like a broken Bow, and will rather deny his Doctrine or Religion, than suffer in the defence of it, it exposes the Credit of it, gives a ground of suspicion that it is not true,

true, at least it is an Argument that he himself
 does not believe it. Our *Saviour* tells us of some,
 St. Luk. 8. 13. that are like the stony Ground,
 who receive the word with joy, but in time of
 temptation fall away. The time of Persecution,
 is the time of Temptation, the time of Tryal,
 which like the cold frosty Air, meliorates and is
 advantageous to sound, but pernicious to sickly,
 unhealthy Bodies, which makes 'em languish and
 die away: or rather like the stronger Wind, which
 ventilates, and fans, and cleanses the solid Grain,
 but drives the Chaff, and the empty, lighter
 Corns away. So *John the Baptist* uses the Simi-
 litude concerning *Christ*: *Whose Fan*, says he, *is*
in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his Floor,
&c. There is a time when *Christ*, the Master
 and Owner of the great *Threshing Floor*, the
Church, takes his *Fan* in his Hand, and by the
 Wind of Persecution does purge his Floor, the
 Chaff flies away, which lay mingled amongst the
 Wheat, but it fans, and cleanses, and discovers the
 purer solid Grain, which he gathers into his
Garner; but will burn up the Chaff with unquenchable
 Fire.

Mat. 3. 12.

The Apostles and their suffering Brethren were
 this purer Wheat, that could endure the blowing,
 and fanning, and cleansing, of the Wind, whilst
 many others like Chaff were too light for the Dis-
 cipline of the Wind, could not endure the violent
 Breath, but were instantly blown away. Blessed is
 the Man, says *St. James*, that endureth Temptation,
 in the time of Tryal. He is an Honour
 to the Gospel, a Comfort to himself, and a Bulwark

to Religion. Who will believe that Man that does not believe himself? And how does that Man believe himself that dares not suffer in defence of that Doctrine which he has taught and deliver'd? But he that can say and suffer, that dares do and die in pursuance and defence of his Doctrine and Religion; why the Beholders of his resolute constancy and passive valour will conclude that there is *et deservit*; some spark of Divinity in this, that there is somewhat extraordinary, some beams of Truth here, which naturally bespeak Credit and Esteem.

Job. 2. 4.

The Devil has observ'd long ago, that *Skin for Skin, and all that a Man hath will he give for his Life.* But he that dares part not only with his Livelihood, but his Life too, in defence of his Doctrine and Religion, convincingly persuades Mankind to believe the Truth of it, and that the Sufferer believes it too; in defence of which he will venture so great a Stake, pay down so large a *Premium*, in lieu of which certainly he is assur'd of somewhat that is far better, of a much more abundant Recompence. He certainly most firmly believes the Doctrine of the Gospel, and of future rewards and punishments, who dares suffer rather than sin against the Revealer and Dispenser of them. St. Paul dares suffer imprisonment, and the loss of Liberty, and Estate, and Life, whilst Impostors, and Cheats, and Pseudo-Apostles boast and talk, but dare not suffer or die; but are guilty of base Tergiversation, turning their backs upon the Truth, which they renounce and deny, when they are put to the Test, the

the severe Tryal, and critical point of suffering.

That's the fifth Reason of St. Paul's choice of this Character to recommend himself by, and enforce his following Exhortation—*The Prisoner of the Lord*—Which is a Presumption, if not a Demonstration of the Truth of that Doctrine which he taught and deliver'd.

6ly. and Lastly, Suffering is the Touch-stone of Vertue, and the Tryal of Sincerity. This he very well knew who knows the Heart, and the workings of it; and therefore was pleas'd to put his Servant *Job* into the School of Affliction, and to try him with Adversity: Not that he wanted a discovery himself, but to silence the Calumnies and Reproaches of the *Devil* and his Instruments, who were ready to object against the Character and Elogy which God gave of him,—Doth *Job* fear God for naught? as we read in that famous Dialogue between God and the *Devil*, in the first Chapter of the Book of *Job* at the 6th. Verse; *Now there was a day when the Sons of God, i. e. the Angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan, the Arch-Devil, the President of the black Society, came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, whence comest thou? Then Satan answer'd, from going too and fro in the Earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, hast thou consider'd my Servant Job, that there is none like him in the Earth, a perfect and an upright Man, one that feareth God and escheweth*

Evil? Then Satan answer'd the Lord and said, Dost Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an Hedge about him, and about his House, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the Work of his Hands, and his substance is increased in the Land. But put forth thy Hand, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy Face. And the Lord said unto Satan, behold all that he hath is in thy Power, only upon himself put not forth thine Hand. Which leave no sooner given, but he improves it to the utmost; the Commission granted wanted not a sharp and speedy Execution. So Satan, says the Text, went forth from the Presence of the Lord, to vex and afflict the Saint, and play'd the Devil indeed; stirring up the Sabceans, and Caldeans, the Fire and the Winds against him; opening the Treasury, the Magazines of the Air (of which he is emphatically call'd the Prince) discharging the Artillery of Heaven against him; making sore and lamentable havock in his Estate, in his Goods, and his Children; leaving him in a manner as naked as the World receiv'd him.

Well, but what effect had this upon Job? Did he curse God to his face, as the Devil said he would? No, but he behav'd himself with meekness, and humility, and resignation to the Sovereign Will, exercising Faith, and Patience, and Trust in God. He arose and rent his Mantle (a token of Sorrow, being a Stranger to the Stoical Apathy) and shaved his Head, and fell down upon the Ground and worshipp'd; and said, naked came I out of my Mother's Womb, and naked shall I return thither. It follows, In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

But

But that the Devil was foild and deceived here, shamefully baffled and disappointed as to his expectation, yet he makes another Effort, resolves to try once more. And to that end presents himself before the Lord upon a solemn Day amongst the Angels: chap. 2. *And the Lord said unto him, v. 3. Hast thou consider'd my Servant Job, that there is none like him in the Earth, a perfect and an upright Man, one that feareth God and escheweth Evil: and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him to destroy him without cause. And Satan answer'd the Lord and said, Skin for Skin, yea all that a Man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Lord said, behold he is in thine hand, but save his Life. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore Boils from the Sole of his Foot unto his Crown.*

And fearing that he was not Devil enough with all his Dragon-like violence to prevail with Job to curse God, he employs an Incarnate Devil, stirr'd up his Wife against him, his Bosom Companion, hoping that her Perswasions and Temptations would be as charming and prevalent, as those of Eve were on her Husband Adam. *Then said his Wife unto him, dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God and dye. But he said unto her, Thou sleekest as one of the foolish Women speaketh. What? sha't we receive good at the hand of God and shall we not receive Evil? It follows, In all this Job did not sin with his Lips: but still exercis'd*

Faith,

Faith, and Patience, and Trust, and Affiance in God. *Though he kill me, says he, yet will I trust in him.* Vertue in a good Man shines the brighter for being clouded with Adversity: of which *Job* was an illustrious Instance and Example.

Adversity was ever esteem'd amongst the ancient Philosophers to be the Touch stone of Vertue, and the Tryal of Sincerity: No very Exemplary Vertue, they thought, could well appear otherwise than in notable misfortune: 'Twas so in the Opinion of *Socrates, Plato, Diogenes, Seneca, Cicero*, and other ancient Philosophers: who did not shrink at Adversity, but shew'd a greatness and presence of Mind, sutable to their sufferings. Their Vertue did not flag, or wither, or fall by those blustering Winds. Adversity is like a tempestuous Wind which tryes the strength of Trees: those which are rotten at the Heart, or Root, it breaks and throws down; but those which are sound are the more confirm'd, the more firmly rooted by those violent shakings.

To approve a man truly vertuous, and heartily righteous, says an ancient Writer, he must be exercis'd with all the Instances of Adversity; not only in his Goods, but his good Name, not only his Estate, but his Body and Life. He must endure all the Instances of Cruelty, he must be imprison'd, and put upon the Rack, and tortur'd and scourg'd, and have his Eyes burn'd out, suffer the pains of Fire, and at last be impaled or dye upon a *Cross*.

It

Magnum Exemplum nisi mala fortuna non invenit.
Sen. de Prov.
c. 3.

ὁ δίκαιος
μαστιγάζεται,
στεινάζεται,
δεδούρεται,
ἐκκαυθήσεται
τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ,
τελευτῶν
πάντα κακὰ
παθὼν ἀνά-
γεινδύσει
θῆσεται.
Plat. de Rep. 2.

It was the Cup of Poyson, says *Seneca*, which made *Socrates* a Great man, and which out of Prison did transfer him to Heaven, or did procure to him that lofty esteem; offering opportunity to signalize his constancy, his equanimity, his unconcernedness for this World and Life. And the Vertue, says he, and the innocence of *Rutilius* would have lain hid, if it had not, by condemnation and exile, received injury; while it was violated it brightly shone forth. And he that said this of others, was himself in nothing so illustrious, as in handsomely entertaining that death to which he was adjudged by the bloody Tyrant. And generally the most honourable Persons, in the Judgment of Posterity, for gallant worth, to this very end, (as * such Philosophers teach) were by Divine Providence deliver'd up to suffer opprobrious condemnations and punishments by the ingrateful malignity of their times. He's a vertuous Man indeed that can endure all this rather than renounce his Vertue and Integrity. And such vertuous Men, such stout courageous Sufferers the World has yeilded; and that both amongst the Heathens, and in the Church of God, of which our Saviour, and the Prophets, and Apostles, and Martyrs were glorious and illustrious Instances.

Thus you see that 'twas for very good and wise Reasons that our Apostle chose this Character, *the Prisoner of the Lord*.

Cicuta Magni Socratem fecit. Sen. Ep.

13.
Calix venenatus, qui Socratem transtulit e Carcere in Calum. Id. Ep.

67.
Aequalis fuit intanta inaequalitate fortuna, &c. Id. Ep. 104.
Rutilij Innocentia ac virtus lateret, nisi accepisset injuriam; dum violatur efful- sit. Id. Ep. 79.

* *Sen. de Prov.*
2. 3. *Plut. de Stoic. Contr.*
Ep. 1931.

And

And now what Improvement should we make of this, but to apply it to our selves in three or four particulars.

1st. Let us not be scandaliz'd at *suffering*, or insult over those that suffer.

Let us not be offended at *suffering*. 'Tis the Lot of the Righteous in this World: the Church's Patrimony, the Portion of the People of God. *The Seed of the Woman*, 'tis promis'd, *shall bruise the Serpent's Head*, but 'tis threaten'd, that *it shall bruise his Heel*. Though the former is more fatal, yet the latter is no less painful; of which the *Seed of the Woman*, and it's genuine *Offspring* have been, and are sadly sensible. Though God has assur'd the Church that his Grace is sufficient for her, yet she must expect a *Thorn in the Flesh*, the *Messenger of Satan to buffet her*. Though he has promis'd to tread *Satan* under her Feet shortly, yet in the interim the Dragon bites with his Mouth, and fights with his Tail, and stings, and wounds, and torments the *Flesh*. Though the Church is the care of Heaven, and the darling of Providence, yet she is sometimes like her Lord, driven into the *Wilderness*, there to be tempted, and persecuted by the *Devil*. Though sometimes she is clad with Purple, embrac'd in the Arms, and sits upon the Throne with Princes, whom God makes her *nursing Fathers*, yet there is a time when you will find her, with *Job*, upon the Dunghil, there sitting in her mourning Weeds, sighing, and groaning, and uttering her complaints
in

in the most doleful Accents, *Behold all ye that pass by, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow !* Which we must not wonder at ; for Tribulation is the Way to Glory. *Through many Tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* This is the common Road, which our *Saviour* and the Prophets and Apostles went to Heaven in. Christians are Cross-bearers. They wear it from the Font to their Funeral ; from the Laver to the Sepulchre. Their Baptism of Water is often seconded with Baptism of Blood. The Cross is not only the Ornament of the Fore-head, but the Burden of the Shoulder too. *If any one will be my Disciple,* says our blessed Lord, *Let him deny himself and take up his Cross and follow me.* A Text, which has often sounded in your Ears, and has been learnedly and passionately improv'd in many excellent melting Sermons ; but alas ! by men rather skill'd in the *Theory*, than the *Practise*, in the *Art of painting* the Cross, than bearing it ; in the Charms of *tragical Eloquence*, and moving the Passions, than the exercise of *Christian Patience*. To whom I am sorry that Character of *St. John's* Sufferers in the *Revelation* does not belong ; *Here's the Patience of the Saints ; here are they that keep the Commandments of God, and the Faith of Jesus.* — *Rev. 14. 12.*
 We have had excellent Discourses of *suffering* and of *patience*, of bearing the *Cross* for the sake of *Christ*, but few Examples of it. We have had Teachers too much of the *Pharisaick* Temper,

per, *binding heavy burdens, and grievous to be born, and laying them on Mens Shoulders, which they themselves will not move with one of their Fingers.*

But 'tis not enough to talk of the *Cross*, but we must take it up. *If any one will be my Disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross*—He must neither be offended at, nor yet despise it, or those that bear it. 'Tis a mark of an unchristian Spirit to insult over those that suffer for *Conscience* sake. 'Tis to sit down in the Seat of the Scornful, and partake with those, from whom the primitive Sufferers had *trial of cruel mockings*. They who insult over, scoff at, and despise those that suffer for *Conscience* sake, for their constant Adherence to the Principles of Faith, and the Truth of the Gospel, and the Laws of God, would have done the same (had they been then living) to *Jesus Christ*, and his Apostles and Martyrs, who suffered for *Conscience* sake.

2dly. Let us rather choose to suffer than to sin. Of which choice *Moses* has given us a Precedent and Example, *Heb. 11. 25.—Choosing rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God than to enjoy the pleasures of Sin for a Season.—Choosing rather—*None would choose to suffer Affliction could he honestly avoid it: For no
Heb. 12. 11. Affliction for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous. 'Tis a Thorn in the Flesh, which throbs and akes. But better be prick'd with those
those

those wounding Thorns than kick against the Pricks. Better walk upon Thorns to Paradise, though they wound and tear the Flesh; than through flowery Meadows and upon beds of Roses, which lead to the Precipice, to the horrid Abyss of Destruction. Better to suffer affliction for a Season, which will end in Eternal Joy, than to enjoy the pleasures of Sin for a Season, which will end in Eternal Pain. When sin and suffering come in competition, 'tis better to choose to suffer than to sin. *Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the People of God than to enjoy the pleasures of Sin*—Alas! what are the pleasures of Sin? They are vain and empty, and short; they are but for a Season.

3dly. Instead of declining or repining at suffering, when our Master by his Providence calls us to it, let us rejoyce that he accounts worthy to suffer for his sake. So did St. Paul, and his Companion Silas, who were fellow-Prisoners at Philippi, where they are so overjoy'd with the honour of suffering for Christ, that after their hard and cruel usage by the Magistrates, *who rent off their clothes, and caus'd them to be beaten and laid many stripes upon them, and then thrust 'em into the inner Prison, the dark and nasty Dungeon, and made their feet fast in the Stocks, a cold, comfortless lodging, an uneasy Seat for sore-wounded Men; yet, I say, they were so transported with Joy, though in that pitiful plight, those lamentable Circumstances, that*

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they

Act. 16.

they sang at Midnight with the loudest Notes, which alarm'd and awaken'd the Prisoners——

They pray'd and sang Praises unto God; they found greater comfort, and mirth, and joy, and peace in their Prison, than their Persecutors did in their Palaces. So blessed and joyful a thing it is to suffer for Christ, as he himself assures

Mat. 5. 10, us, Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake. Blessed are ye when Men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoyce and be exceeding glad: for great is your Reward in Heaven.

4thly. That we may not lose the Reward of our sufferings, let us be sure that our sufferings are sufferings for Christ. And to that end let us look to three things.

1st. That we suffer for a good Cause.

2dly. That our suffering proceeds from a right Principle.

3dly. That it be directed to a right End.

1st. We must be sure that we suffer for a Good Cause. All suffering is not suffering for Christ. There is a suffering Adversity which accidentally befalls men, which they cannot avoid, as losses, and crosses, and poverty, and wounds, and sickness, &c. There is suffering as an Evil doer, for breaking the Laws of God and Man by Theft, Murder, Treason, Rebellion, &c.

This

This is not suffering for *Christ*, tho' perhaps there are some so harden'd as to think so; who think killing, and murder, and Rebellion, and Resistance, and Regicide; to play the *Devil* for God sake, *is to do God service*. But suffering for *Christ*, suffering as a Christian, as *St. Peter* speaks, is a suffering which we may avoid by violating our Duty, and renouncing our Vertue and Integrity. If we choose to suffer rather than to sin, and depart from our plain, known Duty to God revealed in his Word, and written in his Law with the Pen of a Diamond, this is to suffer for *Christ*; and with *Christ*; this is to suffer as a Christian. For 'tis not the *Punishment*, but the *Cause* that makes the *Martyr*.

2dly. Our suffering must proceed from a *right Principle*, viz. the Love of God and his Laws, the love of Vertue and a hatred of Vice. For he that has a secret Love for any Vice, yea, that has not an universal hatred and abhorrence of all sin, because a Violation of the Law of God; his suffering, whatsoever it be, is not a suffering for *Christ*. He that suffers for his constant and resolute adherence to any one Article of Faith, or Principle of Religion, or Doctrine of our Church, or any particular Law of God, and yet allows himself in gross and notorious sins, does not suffer as a Christian. For there must be no commuting in Religion. The performance of one Duty, cannot expiate for the neglect, or violation of another.

Thus,

Thus, for instance, he that suffers for his Allegiance to his King, and yet will violate his Allegiance to his God, who is King of Kings, suffers as a Fool. If he dies in his Prince's quarrel, and sacrifices his Life for his sake, he does but offer the sacrifice of Fools. His suffering is not thank worthy in God's account: 'tis not a suffering for *Christ*, or as a Christian, though in defence of a Christian Principle. Such a Martyr, 'tis to be fear'd, will dwell in the same hotter Region, will go to the same place, where the Soul of his Persecutor does. For, alas! what will it avail a man that he will not swear falsely, if he will swear rashly, and blaspheme his Maker and Redeemer? what will it avail a Man that he will not rebel against his Temporal Prince, and yet will daily rebel against his God; that he will not resist the *lawful Higher Powers*, and yet will always resist the *Holy Ghost*, and grieve the good Spirit of God, which is sent to seal him to the day of Redemption? what will it avail a Man to be a good Subject and a bad Christian, (if that be not a contradiction) a Friend to the King, and an Enemy to God; to drink a Health to his Prince, and Damnation to his Soul by his rioting, and excess, and prodigious debauchery?

What will it avail a Man to believe rightly all the Articles of the Christian Faith, and yet be a Stranger to good Works; to believe in God, and yet not keep his Commandments? What will it avail a man to dispute against, or suffer for not believing *Transubstantiation*, when he

he is guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord, which he receives unworthily; tramples under foot the Son of God, crucifies him a fresh, and puts him to an open shame?

He that suffers for one Principle, and violates his duty to the rest, suffers rather for his *Humour* than for *Christ*, rather as an obstinate man, than a resolute, humble, conscientious, pious Christian, who with *David* can assure himself, that he shall not be ashamed, but have his sure reward, having respect unto all the Commandments; or rather, in the Language of the Apostle here, *walking worthy of the Vocation wherewith he is called.*

3dly. and Lastly, That we may not lose the Reward of our sufferings, they must be directed to a *right end*, viz. God's Glory. It must not be for Ostentation sake, to be accounted a stout, courageous Champion for *Christ*, a valorous *Christian Hero*. This will defile the Sacrifice, and make it stink in the Nostrils of God. *Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but to thy Name be the Glory*, whether we do or suffer for thee, must be the Language of the Church, and every Member of it. And this will perfume the Sacrifice, and make it ascend like the smoking Incense into God's Holy Temple, where the Celestial Chorus of Angels, and Saints, and Martyrs continually do sing, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty,* *Rev. 4. 8.* which was, and is, and is to come. Thou art worthy, *V. 2. II.*

C. 7. 12. *thy, O Lord, to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power. Blessing, and Glory, and Wisdom, and Thanksgiving, and Honour, and Power, and Might be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.*

FINIS

